

Cortez Masto	Luján	Schumer
Duckworth	Manchin	Shaheen
Durbin	Markey	Sinema
Gillibrand	Menendez	Smith
Graham	Merkley	Stabenow
Grassley	Murkowski	Tester
Hassan	Murphy	Tillis
Heinrich	Murray	Van Hollen
Hickenlooper	Ossoff	Warner
Hirono	Padilla	Warnock
Kaine	Peters	Warren
Kelly	Portman	Whitehouse
King	Reed	Wyden
Klobuchar	Rosen	
Leahy	Schatz	

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Hagerty	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeben	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Toomey
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—4

Cruz	Rounds
Feinstein	Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Christopher H. Schroeder, of North Carolina, to be Assistant Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3086

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, right now, American families are worried. The White House thinks inflation is a high-class problem. I clearly imagine the price of Prada bags has gone up, but what the White House continues to miss is that inflation is killing the buying power of Americans on low and fixed incomes.

Across America, families are going through grocery store aisles, seeing higher prices, and having to figure out what they can afford to eat this week. Folks are passing by gas station after gas station, looking for lower prices—to no avail. These aren't just headlines and stories; these are real families who are living paycheck to paycheck and struggling to keep up.

I grew up poor. When my parents' bills went up, it made it more difficult for my family. When gas prices went up, it meant we had less food to put on the table. None of us would wish that on anyone, but that is exactly what is happening in Biden's America—high prices on food, high prices on gas, empty shelves and supply shortages, skyrocketing debt, and Big Government overreach—and that is just the start. Energy prices are through the roof.

Let's take a look at the rising cost at the pump.

Just this week, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel ran a story with the headline: "Gas prices hit their highest levels since 2014. When will we get a break?" As gas prices keep rising, the message from Florida couldn't be more clear.

Last week, the national gas average was \$3.36 a gallon. It was \$2.16 per gallon this time last year. That is a 55-percent increase in just 1 year. If you are driving a car, that means you are seeing an extra cost of about \$800 annually. If you are driving a truck, that means you are probably seeing an extra cost of \$1,400 annually.

More than 5,000 gas stations across the country are charging more than \$4.50 a gallon. In one California community, gas was nearly \$8 per gallon last week. That is insane. Prices may go up even more as forecasters warn that oil could rise to more than \$100 a barrel.

But rising costs don't stop at the pump; they follow you home. For the nearly half of U.S. families who use natural gas to heat their homes, it is going to cost them \$746 just to stay warm during the winter months. If you are using electric heat, prepare to spend more than \$1,200 on your electric bills. Reports show that, this winter, home heating prices are going to rise by more than 40 percent for homes that use heating oil, more than 30 percent for homes using natural gas, and 54 percent for homes using propane. Factor in the rising cost of meat, diapers, milk, and other everyday items, and things are looking pretty dire for the American family.

Last week, President Biden said he "doesn't have a near-term answer" for reducing gas prices. He doesn't appear to have a long-term answer either. In the meantime, he expects families to just hang tight while he does nothing until next year, when things will magically get better.

We all know President Biden likes to play the blame game. This time, he is blaming OPEC for not pumping out more foreign oil. Remember when America was energy independent? Not anymore, thanks to Joe Biden. He has done everything in his power to cut off America's domestic supply and resources needed to warm our homes and run our cars.

In his first month in office, he cut the Keystone Pipeline permit and killed thousands of American jobs. Then he suspended new oil and gas leasing and drilling permits for Federal lands.

He filled his administration with people who have been longtime advocates of a carbon tax, including Treasury Secretary Yellen, which would only make the current problem worse. He has others, like Interior Secretary Haaland, who want to completely ban fracking.

Oddly enough, he supported Russia's getting the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, which gives Russia a massive win, and he has put us back into the Paris cli-

mate accords, which are already ruining Europe. European countries are scaling back on oil and gas production to meet the Paris Agreement. In Portugal, electricity prices have tripled over the past 6 months, and Germany's prices are three times the U.S. average. Across Europe, they have to rely on energy imports from Russia.

Instead of pursuing a path of energy independence, Biden continues to push ridiculous energy policies in his massive \$5.5 trillion spending package that will cut our legs out from under us and cause America to become even more dependent on Russia and the OPEC countries, and he is relentlessly pursuing a reckless tax-and-spending spree even though we know reckless spending causes inflation.

These effects might not be felt by President Biden, but I can tell you that, since Biden took office, more families across the State of Florida and across the Nation have felt the pain of having to count their pennies.

For the sake of American families, we need to figure out what the heck is going on. This is why I have introduced a very simple bill to get to the bottom of these sky-high prices. I am thankful for Senators MARSHALL, LUMMIS, CAPITO, JOHNSON, MORAN, and BLACKBURN, who have cosponsored this legislation.

The GAS Price Act will simply require the Energy Information Administration to report publicly to Congress on any Federal Agency policies or regulations that it determines will cause energy prices to rise. All my bill does is ask a Federal Agency to provide important information to us in Congress with a statement of facts on what is causing rising energy prices since President Biden was sworn into office. Then we can take this information, see what needs to be fixed, and help the American people. That is it. Let's tell Americans why this is happening, and let's figure out how to fix it. It is as simple as that.

I am sure none of my colleagues would disagree to keeping Congress informed about new rules or policies that have a negative financial impact on families in our great State.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3086, which is at the desk. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I rise to object to the Senator from Florida's request to pass this legislation through unanimous consent.

If we want to tackle rising fuel costs, let's do something that will actually protect American consumers and actually promote our energy independence. Let's reinstate the fossil fuel ban that was lifted in 2015.

Listen to what has happened here in our Nation since 2015, when every Republican on this Senate floor—when they controlled the Senate—voted to lift the ban on the exportation of oil from the United States. That ban had been in place for 50 years to keep American oil here.

Well, here's what the Republicans did in the House and Senate back in 2015: they lifted the ban.

Oil companies from the United States now send our oil overseas. And get this: In 2020, we exported more than 8.5 million barrels of petroleum every single day out of the United States to other countries. And, in 2020, pursuant to Republican Senators in 2015, we, in 2020, for the first time in more than 50 years, exported more barrels of petroleum every single day—exported—than imported.

Is that energy independence?

I don't think so.

And why do we do it?

I will tell you why we do it. It is for the oil companies. That is why we do it.

The Republicans don't want to do anything on climate change—oil companies. The oil companies want to export American oil, drill for it here in the United States, because they can make more money selling that oil into the international marketplace. Of course, that is what the Republicans are going to vote for back in 2015.

And here's what happened: we got up to 2021, and we now are net exporters of petroleum in our country.

So the bill that is being proposed would actually do nothing to help consumers at the pump. The one thing that we could do is reimpose the ban on the exportation of these 8.5 million barrels of oil a day. Keep it here. It is lower priced. It is drilled for in the United States. Our economy would get the benefit of that lower priced oil and people would be going up to the pump, paying a lot less per gallon of gasoline than they are doing right now.

But you are not going to hear anything from the Republican Party that takes on the oil industry and their international market using American oil to make more money because people in the rest of the world will pay more for it. But that leaves less American oil here for drivers, as they are pulling in to the pump every single day.

So this is just the greed of the domestic oil industry so that they can have unlimited international energy markets so that, ultimately—and this is the beauty of it—they make more money overseas and they get to tip American consumers upside down at the pumps as they have got their fingers on this nozzle and watching this price of gasoline go up even as they are looking at it. It is a beautiful world for the oil industry to have the cooperation of the Republican Party on this agenda.

And so all I can say is that this proposal is just the opposite of what we

should be talking about. The Republicans should be reexamining their own conscience about what they did in 2015, instead of shedding crocodile tears today as though Joe Biden did this. This net export of petroleum products is a Republican idea driven by the Republicans who sit here on the Senate floor.

And so in no way should this resolution pass, and so I object to the Senator's motion for unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. That would be interesting if it was true. When you think about it—and you can look at oil prices, and they are international oil prices—it is illogical to believe that the American oil companies want to spend the transportation dollars to send the oil overseas if they could sell it in America.

So, first off, I am truly shocked that my colleague would say those things. I am shocked that he would object, but I get it. I know my Democratic colleagues have to bend over backwards to protect the Biden administration's disastrous energy policies. But I find it hard to believe they would go so far as to object to having basic transparency. Maybe, if what my colleague said was true, then my bill would show—they would come back and say: Yup, that is exactly what happened.

My bill would simply provide us with greater insight into the cause of rising gas and energy prices in the United States.

We must be committed to making the American dream work for everyone, ensuring that every family, including poor families, have a chance to get ahead.

I think about my mom and dad. I watched them struggle to make ends meet. This inflation, these gas prices, food prices, all these things, are hurting the poorest families in this country. When you get very little, like we did, and prices go up—gas prices, food prices—it means it is a very difficult time for these families. Hard-working families are trying to get by.

We need to provide more information to Congress so we can make good decisions to figure out why these gas prices are going up the way they are.

So I am disappointed that my colleague would object to a simple way of trying to figure out exactly what has happened here, why gas prices are going up, and what should Congress be doing to make sure that doesn't continue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

SENTENCING DISPARITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to speak on another topic that, sadly, is still relevant today as it has been for so many years. And I want to start by recalling 35 years ago, when I

was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I was faced with one of the most troubling votes in my whole career.

It was the height of the war on drugs. A new narcotic showed up. It was called crack cocaine. We didn't know much about it, but we knew several things: First, highly addictive; second, dirt cheap; third, if a woman who was pregnant used it, she could cause permanent harm to the baby she was carrying.

We started worrying that this was going to become the drug of choice across America and that the war on drugs was going to be lost forever.

And just about the time we were debating this, an event took place that really had no direct connection to crack cocaine, but it rocked the Capitol.

There was a basketball player at the University of Maryland, whose name was Len Bias. He was a very good basketball player, destined for the NBA. Sadly, he overdosed and died. It shocked everyone all across this region, and it certainly was felt in the House of Representatives. And, perhaps, it was part of the impetus for a measure that we enacted, which I later came to really regret.

Congress took action in 1986. I joined 400 of my House colleagues. We decided to take a stand—a really powerful stand—against crack cocaine. We decided to create a sentencing regime for crack cocaine that would be so overwhelming that anyone across America who considered using it would think twice. We went to an extreme. We decided to impose a 100-to-1 disparity between crack cocaine and powdered cocaine.

What does that mean?

If you are arrested with 5 grams of crack, you were subject to the same mandatory sentencing as someone arrested with 500 grams of powder cocaine, a 100-to-1 sentencing disparity. Our logic was there. If people knew that that kind of penalty awaits, they will surely stay away from this deadly new narcotic.

It turned out we were completely wrong. The net result of our 100-to-1 disparity against crack cocaine didn't drive the cost of the drug up on the street. It drove it down. It didn't lessen the number of people who were addicted. It increased the number of who were addicted—exactly the opposite of what we expected to happen.

And then for a decade, maybe two decades, we reaped the whirlwind. The 100-to-1 disparity meant that we were filling our prisons to a level we had never seen in the history of the United States, and, frankly, a level the world had never seen in terms of prison population. Sadly, the vast majority of them were African Americans. We stole away one or two generations of African-American males—and some females, too—in the process of making this terrible mistake.